



State of Utah

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NEW PROGRAM BENEFITS FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES

We all know what being a good neighbor is, especially if you've ever had a bad neighbor. A recent federal appropriations act is encouraging the U.S.D.A. Forest Service to be the type of neighbor we like next door. Language in that act has created what is called a "good neighbor authority." This authority permits the Forest Service to enter in agreement with the State Forester to implement projects designed to improve forest, rangeland and watershed health on Forest Service lands using state resources and purchasing regulations.

The "good neighbor authority" streamlines the contractual process for the Forest Service, and gives the State Forester flexibility to promote rural economies, create local partnership opportunities, and leverage federal projects with state and private projects.

"This is a real win-win situation for all concerned," said State Forester Joel Frandsen. "Much needed work on federal lands is accomplished faster and cheaper and often local economies benefit directly when local businesses are contracted for the work."

Since the program has taken effect one project has been accomplished. A state fire crew of college students from the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy was contracted to replace range fencing and repair four miles of recreation trail damaged by the Hawkins Fire on the Dixie National Forest. Future projects are scheduled or now in negotiations.

"This program is in its infancy," notes Frandsen. "But, we expect to see it grow and by doing so see healthier forests and local economies strengthened."

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